(b) and (c) Losses in foodgrains may be occurring at various stages during multiple handling and transportation by various means to and from the FCI Deports and railheads. Railways have no arrangement for weighing foodgrains consignments before booking. FCI has also not found it viable to install in-motion weigh-bridges at its cost. The Railway Board has made it clear that "Clear Railway Receipt" or "said to contain" Railway Receipts have no meaning for the purpose of shortages so far as the Railways are concerned because in either case when wagon seals remain intact the Railways would normally have no liability for shortages, if any, hence weighment by Railway would be immaterial. The matter of installation of reliable in-motion weighbridges and the broad scheme there of or any other alternative method for fixing accountability in the event of transit losses is yet to be decided between the FCI and the Railways.

BIS norms for water

1589. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention have been drawn to the news-item captioned 'BIS norms vague: Says CSE' as reported in the "Hindu" dated the 5th February, 2003;

(b) if so, whether reputation of the BIS has fallen considerably due toits own norms being ineffective in dealing with the quality products; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to wind up the BIS in view of its failure to protect the consumers right?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS , FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. A seminar was convened by Bureau of Indian Standards on 13th February, 2003 to determine whether the Packaged Drinking Water and Natural Mineral Water manufactured as per existing Indian Standards was fit for human consumption. The seminar was attended by eminent scientists representing Government bodies, representative of World Health Organization, Consumers, representatives of Industry and other stakeholders. The seminar affirmed that the

Packaged Drinking Water and Natural Mineral Water now being produced according to the BIS Standards is fit for human consumption.

Export contract of rice

1590. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's image as a grain exporter in the international market has been tarnished due to delay in execution of export contracts of rice;

(b) whether it is also a fact that non-execution of contracts by the exporters is due to FCIs inability to move grains to port and now demanding a price of Rs. 6160 as against old price of Rs. 5910 per tonne of rice on which pending contracts were signed; and

(c) if so, what urgent steps are being taken to restore India's image and preventing such lapses in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Safety standard for packaged water

1591. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after initially raising the safety standards for packaged drinking water to European Union specifications, the Bureau of Indian Standards backtracked on its move;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (c) No, Sir. BIS taking into consideration the limits of pesticide residues laid down by US FDA, EU, World Health Organization,